

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 199
By Jones, S.

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study
technologically advanced traffic control systems,
including the intelligent transportation system.

WHEREAS, Tennessee's dramatic rate of population growth is significantly increasing traffic congestion, especially in the metropolitan areas of Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, the rapidly growing problem of traffic congestion is not only a source of aggravation to motorists, it also inhibits productivity and economic growth and contributes adversely to environmental and safety problems; and

WHEREAS, a Texas Transportation Institute study demonstrates that in Nashville alone, commuters spend an average of thirty (30) hours per year stuck in traffic, thus causing a loss of productivity estimated at two hundred million dollars (\$200,000,000) per year; and

WHEREAS, vehicles stalled by traffic congestion waste precious fossil fuels and increase air pollution; and

WHEREAS, increased traffic congestion may cause tourists to avoid the state's urban centers and may discourage businesses from relocating to Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, with approximately seventy percent (70%) of Tennessee motorists utilizing the interstate system, traffic congestion is a major contributing factor in the over one hundred fifty thousand (150,000) traffic accidents, one thousand two hundred (1,200) of which involve fatalities, on Tennessee roads each year; and

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WHEREAS, new technologies promise to make public transportation systems safer, more efficient and more traveler-friendly; and

WHEREAS, the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) is a 21st Century approach to safer and more efficient highways; and

WHEREAS, the Intelligent Transportation System utilizes video cameras and interchangeable electronic signs to warn commuters of wrecks, traffic congestion, current speed and volume of traffic, construction, detours and other variables that cause highway accidents and traffic congestion; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Transportation is successfully utilizing ITS in the Atlanta area and plans to expand the program to statewide application; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Transportation's outcome studies demonstrate conclusively that ITS: (1) automatically adjusts the flow of traffic on highways and interstates, increasing highway capacity by fifteen percent (15%); (2) reduces secondary accidents by providing early warning to motorists as they approach accidents or other traffic incidents; and (3) effectively uses a multi-media approach to keep motorists well-informed about traffic conditions, including video, Internet access and computerized message boards; and

WHEREAS, ITS significantly reduces traffic congestion by expediting the resolution of accidents and the clearing of traffic lanes; and

WHEREAS, Georgia Department of Transportation research demonstrates ITS can save up to ninety-eight thousand dollars (\$98,000) per kilometer of monitored roadway per year in highly congested traffic areas through the provision of safer driving conditions, fewer secondary accidents and reduced vehicle delay; and

WHEREAS, Georgia DOT has offered to donate four million dollars (\$4,000,000) of computer software to operate an Intelligent Transportation System in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, unless the numerous issues concerning traffic congestion are addressed in a comprehensive manner, traffic congestion may overwhelm the resources of the communities that suffer from its many deleterious effects; and

WHEREAS, increased traffic congestion directly affects the economic prosperity, safety and quality of life of all Tennesseans and all viable ways and means to resolve the myriad problems associated with traffic congestion should be carefully and exhaustively studied by this General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to study technologically advanced traffic control systems to relieve traffic congestion, including the intelligent transportation system, and the feasibility of implementing a technologically advanced traffic control system in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That in its deliberations, the special joint committee shall review the implementation of such traffic control systems in other states and identify potential funding resources for the implementation of a technologically advanced traffic control system to relieve traffic congestion in Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the committee shall consist of three (3) members of the House of Representatives and three (3) members of the Senate, to be appointed by the respective speakers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly; and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the General Assembly no later than February 1, 1998, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.